

Save the Manatee® Club

The Voice for Manatees Since 1981

Save the Manatee® Club (SMC) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit conservation organization, established in 1981 by singer/songwriter Jimmy Buffett and former Florida Governor and U.S. Senator Bob Graham. SMC's mission is to protect imperiled manatees and their aquatic habitat for future generations. To accomplish its mission, SMC works closely with federal, state, and local governments, as well as with the public at the grass roots level, and supports policies that are based on the best scientific data available. SMC raises public awareness; educates; conducts research; sponsors rescue, rehabilitation, and release efforts; supports land acquisition; promotes aquatic habitat protection; advocates for improved protection measures; and assists education and conservation efforts in other countries.

2018 Highlights of Activities and Accomplishments

Conservation and Advocacy

With the help of our supporters and diverse grassroots network, we work in virtually every area of manatee conservation. In 2018, SMC:

- Objected to the unwarranted removal of crucial Endangered Species Act (ESA) regulatory protections likely to negatively impact manatees and manatee habitat. SMC provided comprehensive, science-based advocacy efforts and legal analysis of key federal laws, rules, and statutes.
- Collaborated with the Manatee EcoTourism Association of Citrus County to continue the Guardian Guides pilot program, a set of standards developed to protect manatees from human harassment during tourism activities.
- During Florida's legislative session, advocated for a statewide fracking ban and for funding of Everglades restoration and land acquisition for conservation.
- Served as a representative and board member for the Florida Springs Council, a statewide association of organizations focused on springs protection issues and advocacy.



A manatee mother and her calf in the protected warm water sanctuary at Blue Spring State Park.

- Rallied national, state, and local supporters to act on numerous issues supporting the ESA and opposing cuts in funding for imperiled species.
- Advocated to adopt more protective Basin Management Action Plans (BMAPs), particularly for Volusia Blue Spring, where many SMC manatee adoptees reside in winter. These BMAPs are intended to restore water quality by reducing nutrient inputs to springs and their contributing waters.
- Presented as invited speakers at several conferences, symposia, and educational meetings.
- Published op-eds and addressed questions about the importance of civic engagement in resolving the myriad threats manatees may suffer due to algae blooms and red tide.
- Continued the Rose Bay Next Generation Restoration Project in east Volusia County. The project endeavors to create the first community-wide living shoreline and create a model for community-driven habitat management.



SMC's Dr. Katie Tripp, working with local residents on the Living Shoreline Project.

International and Interstate Conservation

We have helped to conserve manatee populations around the globe by supporting local education and conservation efforts to improve the lives of manatees and local residents. In 2018, SMC:

- Explored opportunities for partnerships with the African Marine Mammal Conservation Organization in Cameroon, and provided funding to assist with education and outreach efforts there.
- Continued collaborative efforts with Wildtracks, Belize's only manatee rehabilitation facility. Sent funds, supplies, and essential equipment to assist their rescue and rehabilitation needs.
- Continued providing assistance in other countries where manatees reside.



Manatee "Hope" in rehabilitation at Wildtracks in Belize.

Rescue, Rehabilitation, and Release

SMC appreciates all its partners' efforts on the manatees' behalf. Our goal is to ensure that each manatee has the best chance of surviving an injury or illness, and returning to the wild. In 2018, SMC:

- Continued efforts to protect the funding for Florida's Critical Care Program so that sick, injured, and orphaned manatees could be rescued, rehabilitated, and returned to the wild.
- Assisted with, and documented, several manatee rescues and releases and participated in post-release monitoring.
- Continued to actively support the work of the Manatee Rescue and Rehabilitation Partnership, whose goal is to rescue and treat sick or injured manatees and release them back into the wild.
- Led the Blue Spring Manatee Observer Volunteer Group to prevent manatee harassment during the summer months.



SMC staff assisting with a manatee release.

Education and Public Awareness

Our extensive education and outreach efforts have grown impressively over the years with help from our supporters and volunteers. In 2018, SMC:

- Increased public awareness about manatees through our Blue Spring State Park Manatee Webcams. The Club recently switched to the Camstreamer application, so the webcams could be available on mobile devices.
- Produced a large number of educational videos for our growing YouTube channel.
- Educated the public through the *Paddle Tales eNewsletter*, which features current manatee news, educational features, photos, video, activities, and manatee Q & A.
- Responded to numerous footage and interview requests from the media.



Manatee Observer Ally Greco helps to prevent manatee harassment at Blue Spring State Park.

- Updated our website that serves as a vast resource to help people learn about manatees, current issues affecting them, Save the Manatee Club's work, and how they can get involved to help protect them.

service announcements (PSAs) for the national print media, magazines, newspapers, blogs, websites, and radio and TV stations.

- Continued our distribution of free public awareness materials such as signs for shoreline property owners, and banners, tips cards, and decals for boaters, featuring instructions to report sick or injured manatees.



SMC provides free educational materials to boaters.

- Coordinated multiple events and educational presentations with dedicated SMC volunteers.
- Published and distributed a wide variety of free educational materials



SMC volunteers Deb and Doug Brown volunteering at one of many outreach events.

to teachers, students, parks, environmental groups, libraries, government agencies, and others.

Research

Over the years, SMC has supported numerous cooperative research projects. Accurate and current data are essential tools that help when advocating for new or continued protections for manatees and their aquatic habitat. In 2018, SMC:

- Continued decades-long observations on the Blue Spring manatees and shared data such as scar sheets and genealogies with manatee researchers and other scientists.
- Participated in the statewide synoptic survey, held annually to obtain a minimum count of manatees in Florida.
- Utilized webcams and on-site observations for manatee research and health checks at Blue Spring State Park.



SMC Manatee Specialist Wayne Hartley with the new research canoe donated by SMC supporters.

Membership and Development

Our members and supporters are the heart of our organization, allowing us to continue being the voice for manatees worldwide. With the help of manatee advocates worldwide, in 2018, SMC:

- Continued the integration and advancements of our online technologies, improving efficiencies and providing our members a more personal and interactive experience.
- Added thousands of new donors, manatee adopters, volunteers, and online supporters and advocates to our growing manatee community.
- Participated in the 15th Annual Save the Manatee 5K event in Michigan, organized by L'Anse Creuse High School biology teacher, Lesley Argiri. Over 1,000 people participated in-person and nearly 2,000 participated virtually.
- Was the featured charity by 4Ocean.com for the month of October where public purchases of the 4Ocean bracelet provided an additional \$10,000 for manatee conservation.
- Participated in and won the "Jet Blue Green Up 2018" campaign, which will provide additional funding for manatees in 2019.



Proud supporters showing off their medals at the 15th Annual Save the Manatee 5K event.



Save the Manatee® Club

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